

Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at
www.icworc.com and Facebook
Email: icworc@live.com

SUNDAY MASSES
SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:00 PM
SUNDAY: 7:30 AM, 10:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
Saturday 2:45 - 3:45 PM
(or by appointment)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
Parents and godparents of infants to be baptized are expected to participate in a preparation session. Call the Rectory to register for this process and set a date for the actual Baptism. For Baptism of adults please contact the Rectory.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE
Please contact the rectory one year prior to your desired wedding date

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK
Father Walter can be called whenever someone can benefit from this sacrament of healing.

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH AND CHILDREN
If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by a priest, religious or lay person working for the Church, and you want to share feelings of hurt or betrayal, call Cathaleen Peloquin, Victim Services Coordinator, Office of Healing and Prevention, 508-929-4363 (direct, confidential line).

RECTORY ADDRESS

353 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605
Phone: 508-754-8419
Fax: 508-306-9718
Religious Education Phone: 508-868-8119
Rectory Hours: M: 9:30am-2:30pm, T: 9:30am-2:30pm
W: 9:30am-2:30pm, F: 9:30am-2:30pm

MOST REV. ROBERT J. MCMANUS, Bishop of Worcester
REV. WALTER RILEY, PASTOR
REV. ENOCH KYEREMATENG, IN RESIDENCE
KEVIN DEIGNAN, PERMANENT DEACON
FRANK MYSKA, PERMANENT DEACON
**MARY SYCKS, ADMINISTRATOR OF RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTER**
C. HENRY MASON, MUSIC DIRECTOR
BRIDGET KLOFFT, CANTOR
JENNEFER NOBERINI, PARISH SECRETARY
MATTHEW FOSTER, PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN
LYNDA MONAHAN, SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR

WEEKDAY MASSES
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM
THURSDAY 8:00 AM

NEW PARISHIONERS
Anyone is welcome to join the Parish Community.
Please contact the Rectory and introduce yourself.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 14, 2021

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat.	Mar 13	4:00 PM	Doris Herrmann, from the Lapid Family
Sun.	Mar 14	7:30 AM	James L. McDonald, from Tom Kelly
		10:00 AM	Rita L. Letendre, from Family
Mon.	Mar 15	9:00 AM	Theresa Duff, from Family
Tues.	Mar 16	9:00 AM	Andrea Bacon, from Family
Wed.	Mar 17	9:00 AM	Paul Keat, from Family
Thurs.	Mar 18	8:00 AM	Sisters of St. Joseph, both living and deceased, from the Community
Sat.	Mar 20	4:00 PM	Quyen Nguyen, 3rd Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Mar 21	7:30 AM	Jeanette T. Burns, Brian B. Colonies, and Chuck Burns, from Family
		10:00 AM	George "Bucky" Sheehan, 1st Anniversary, from Family and Friends

INVITATION TO LENTEN DAILY MASS

We invite parishioners to consider attending daily Mass (there's plenty of room in the Church) during the season of Lent for those who are in situation to do so. The number one spiritual benefit that we can gain from this holy season, deepening our relationship with the Lord, is our presence at the liturgy. The spiritual mindset of attending Mass each day during Lent has been, like many beautiful traditions in our present time, lost to some degree. Consider recapturing this religious commitment for 2021 and in the years ahead.

TUESDAY EVENING LENTEN CONFESSIONS

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in the Church for the remaining Tuesdays of Lent from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Confessions will be heard in the cry room in the front of the Church. Please consider taking advantage of God's Sacrament of mercy during this time of repentance and prayer.

LENT BIBLE STUDY FOR YOUNG ADULTS

All young adults are invited to join us for a virtual Lenten Bible Study **every Tuesday evening of Lent at 8pm**. The Bible study will involve Lectio Divina along with a discussion. Each session will be unique to that Sunday's gospel reading so individuals are welcome to attend all gatherings, some, or even just one or two. Feel free to attend as often as you are able! To sign up to receive the Zoom link, go to neworchester.org/lent-lectio-divina

SCRIPTURE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Fr. Riley is holding a one-hour Scripture study class each Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Church Basement. We will read, study, and discuss the Gospel of Matthew. The next class will be held on Wednesday, March 17. In preparation for this class please read chapters 27. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

HOLY HOUR AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS OF LENT

Because of the lesser amount of people who attend Holy Hour and Stations of the Cross in the Church during the Season of Lent as opposed to Sunday Mass, we will be able to hold in our Church these two wonderful devotions without concern for going over present gathering limits because of the pandemic. During each Friday of Lent a Holy Hour will be held from 5:30-6:30 p.m., followed by Stations of the Cross from 6:30-7:00 p.m. We invite any parishioner who wishes to attend. As with all Masses in our Church, social distance is to be practiced throughout the 1-1/2 hours these two devotions are held, unless those in attendance live in the same household. We ask all attendees to be ever vigilant in this regard. Thank you.

PRIESTLY DISCERNMENT RETREAT

The Office for Vocations announces that the annual priestly discernment retreat for men high school aged or older will take place on **Saturday, March 27 from 9-5** at North American Martyrs in Auburn. Join us for a day of prayer, witness talks from priests and seminarians, and a presentation from Bishop McManus on discerning a priestly vocation. Social distance guidelines will be followed.

FRIDAY FASTING AND INTENTION

We thank all our parishioners who continue to fast for one meal and abstain from meat each Friday as we commemorate our Lord's saving act on that day. This wonderful Catholic tradition is reemerging, calling us to be mindful of our Lord's crucifixion every Friday of the year. Such a particular awareness in our lives can only deepen our faith and love in Christ. As we fast and abstain, we do so each week for an intention that is to us on a local, national, or world level, always effecting our faith. Next Friday's intention is for *our continued commitment to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lenten season.*

EASTER SUNDAY MASSES DIFFERENT SCHEDULE AND SIGN UP

Because of the pandemic and the ongoing concern for social distancing in the Church, combined with Easter Sunday traditionally being a day when more attendees are in Church than we find on other Sundays, there arises the need for a change in the Mass schedule for Easter Sunday, as well as the need for our parishioners and all attendees to sign up for a certain Mass so that our numbers do not reach the danger point of infringing on the social distancing aspect of attending Mass. Therefore, our schedule will be the following: Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 3 will begin at 7:30 p.m. Easter Sunday Masses, April 4, will be at 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Signup will be necessary for the 3 Masses on Easter Sunday morning only. *Signup will not be necessary for the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday evening at 7:30*, since fewer people normally attend that Mass. Signing up for your respective Mass on Easter Sunday morning will begin on Monday, March 8. The place for signup will be our Parish Website; icworc.com. Like Christmas Masses last year, tickets will be needed for entrance into the Church for each of the 3 Easter Sunday morning Masses. You will be able to print off your ticket at the time you sign up for the Mass you wish to attend. The number of attendees for each Mass will be capped at 120. For anyone who does not have a computer and plans on attending Mass on Easter Sunday morning, please speak with Fr. Riley and he will sign you up. We apologize for any inconvenience in this matter, but it is for the safety, well-being, and comfortability of all who attend Mass on Easter Sunday morning. Any questions, feel free to call the rectory or speak with Fr. Riley at any time.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 3/07/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online) \$ 4,337.50

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 21, THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalm: 130

2nd Reading: Romans 8:8-11

Gospel: John 11:1-45

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, March 14th at 8:45AM-9:45AM for children in grades K-6 and 11:15AM-12:15PM for students in grades 7-10 and Confirmation Class.
Inclement weather policy ~ For cancellations of Religious Education classes due to weather conditions please check the Immaculate Conception website or Facebook Page. You can also call the Office of Religious Education at 508-868-8119.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY

The Partners in Charity Campaign will begin in our Parish this weekend, March 13/14. Our Campaign Chairman, parishioner Bill Stanton, will speak briefly at each Mass after the homily, which will also be brief. I wish to thank Bill for stepping forward again this year to assist in this most important annual campaign that supports so many ministries essential to the life and works of our Diocese. From treating and serving basic needs of the poor in our communities, to seminarians studying for priesthood, retired priests who have dedicated their life's work to our Diocese, and many more ministries. Envelopes and information for the 2021 campaign will be placed at each entrance to the Church for Masses next week for anyone who has not received this information through a Diocesan mailing. Our Parish goal remains the same as past years; \$88,500, and I pray that each parishioner will consider this year donating on behalf of our Parish. Thank you, Fr. Riley.

2021 TRIP TO POLAND SIGNUP NOW

Our Parish trip to Poland has been rescheduled for September. The new dates for the trip will be September 20-30, 2021. The cost of the trip is \$3389, and single supplement \$700. We will visit cities and sites such as Warsaw and its historic monuments, Malbork Castle, Gdansk, Torun and the house where Nicolaus Copernicus was born, Czestochowa, a tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Krakow and a visit to the 16th century Wawel Royal Castle, as well as the Jewish Quarter, the birthplace of St. John Paul II and the Museum of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, and other cultural experiences of Poland. Consider joining us on this wonderful trip of religion, history, and culture to beautiful Poland. We have 32 seats reserved for this trip with 16 of them presently filled. Signup sheets can be printed off from our Parish website at icworc.com and sent to Fr. Riley at the Church. The last day for signup is June 1. Any questions please call Fr. Riley at 508-754-8419, or Callie Foster at 508-397-5883. Thank you.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

A FAILED ATTEMPT TO NULLIFY THE MIRACLE: Jn 9:18; "It is the nature of truth to be strengthened by the very sneers that are laid against it by people ... lies defeat themselves by the very means they use against the truth, making it appear even brighter, as is the case now. For the argument that might otherwise have been urged - that is, that the neighbors knew nothing for certain but were guessing on the basis that this man looked like the one who was healed - that whole argument is cut off by the introduction of the parents who could, of course, testify to their own son. The Pharisees, being unable by intimidation to deter the blind man from publicly proclaiming his benefactor, try to nullify the miracle through the parents."

St. John Chrysostom (c347-407)

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS FOR 2020

Any parishioner who would like to receive a statement for your contributions for 2020 for tax purposes, please call the rectory during office hours as found on the front page of the bulletin, or email us at icworc@live.com and we will mail you a copy.

HOPE FOR HOUSING FOOD CARDS

Please consider supporting through our Parish the purchase of food cards for Hope for Housing, whose primary mission is to assist families from becoming homeless in our community. Available are cards for Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Big Y, CVS, Panera Bread, and Dunkin Donuts. This past week card sales amounted to \$200.00. Thank you.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

philosophy that delivers to us death, destruction, lies, and an ocean liner's worth of anger? If only they would allow the Lord to lead by welcoming Him into the heart of their decisions, providing the necessary light. It forces me to make the point once again; there is no more dangerous politician for the good and freedom of God's people (the whole world) than one who is not a God-fearing person. They are without doubt the blindest people in today's world, and the only place they will lead others is into the Pit down below, the same direction they themselves are heading. Where God is absent and tossed aside, *nothing good will result*. One needs to look no further than the passing of the purely evil Roe Act in this state. Only politicians who have no fear of God can produce such unspeakable blindness and shame.

So, Jesus takes the initiative and does what he does best; he produces good through love by giving sight to the man born blind. "Good through love" is the A-1 formula for leaders to make decisions. Everyone begins to wonder how his sight came about. The Pharisees, the great protectors of the Law, get their ire up because, again, Jesus performed a miracle of love on the sabbath. "Who did this to you?" they ask the man born blind. "I don't know. He asked me if I wanted to see. I thought it was a great idea. He rubbed some mud in my eyes, and then I could see." An honest answer...so refreshing. Call in the parents to find out what's going on here. The parents enter the scene. "Is this your son?" "Yes, that's him," his mother says to the protectors of the Law. "Can't you tell he's got my nose?" "How can he now see? Wasn't he born blind?" they ask her. "Yes, he was born blind." Time to pass the buck out of fear and ignorance. "Ask him yourself," the parents tell them. "He's old enough to answer for himself." And answer them he does with a question that insults them, "Do you too want to be his disciple?" Boy, talk about rubbing salt in the wound of sabbath-breaking!

At the end of the day, everyone passes the buck in the healing of the man born blind, doing so out of fear of someone, be it God or Pharisees, except the one who received his sight. He's the only fearless, honest one in the crowd. Fearless in the sense of speaking the truth that is. "I do believe, Lord. Yes, I do believe you are the Son of Man. Yes, I will worship you alone. And yes, I will be your disciple, proclaiming my full allegiance and attention to you, and not to some wayward political ideology with more holes in it than 100 pounds of Swiss cheese. Yes, Lord, I belong to you, and not some fractious party of backslappers."

The buck is not to be passed when it concerns the living out of our Catholic faith. Our faith touches every aspect and part of life. For any professed Catholics who make excuses for your dear politicians who have made egregious mistakes, be gone with your spiritual blindness and open your eyes to the truth that bowls over your political positions. There is way too much blindness taking place from so-called Christians, standing behind politicians who support the destruction of human life, believing that somehow God is going to look past such evil, abhorrent choices. I tell you straight out *that will not happen*. Every one of us will be judged on every thought, every decision, every beat of our heart as we stand naked before Him at our death. May we all learn from the man born blind to not pass the buck, but be authentic disciples of Christ Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Peace, Fr. Riley

FROM THE PASTOR

Pass the buck. We all know that game, one that certain politicians have perfected. Pass the buck when something awful is about to be revealed. Or something terrible is about to happen. Or, even after the fact, pass the buck when horrible, horrible events, such as the deaths of thousands of people in nursing homes in New York state dying from the effects and exposure to the coronavirus. Pass the buck and blame someone else who had nothing at all to do with the decision to move the exposed into a place where it would run rampant in the bodies of people who were the top candidates for death if they caught the disease, the elderly and physically compromised. That situation just south of us has to be the number one “pass the buck because I’m not honest enough, or mature enough, or big enough a person to admit the obvious facts” ever.

“Pass the buck” is one of those games we humans have invented for those situations in life, large and small, when we just don’t have the internal wherewithal to accept responsibility for some event or action that makes us look bad, or exposes our weakness as a leader or person. We know in our heart of hearts that we are at fault, or complicit, or the driver of the horse wagon if you know what I mean (it was *our* faulty idea). But there’s something going on inside our souls and spirits that fails to allow our acceptance of what we know is true. Is there anything worse than watching a politician lie about something the whole world knows to be true? It’s beyond disgusting and comprehension to think that such “leaders” will stand before a camera and treat the world like we are plain stupid when the facts are so obvious. Pass the buck. Blame the other guy. They won’t figure it out. They’re too dumb. It’ll go away quickly if I tell a little fib about myself being the first reason why over 7,000 people died unnecessarily in nursing homes from the effects of the virus. And so it goes. It’s no wonder why so many millions are turned off by such spiritual weaklings and their futile attempts to save their skin. No one is perfect by any means. But if we are complicit in a grievous – or not so grievous act – just plead guilty and don’t waste the law court’s time, or the court of public opinion’s time. Instead, we get pass the buck.

In the Gospel this week, we see this fear playing out in the story of the man born blind. Pass the buck on how he was healed. Except here, the one who performed the righteous act, as opposed to an evil decision, does not blame someone else for performing such a great act of love. Ah, that’s it! If only those weak humans could and would perform acts of love rather than acts of horror, be complicit in building up God’s kingdom rather than tearing it down through lack of respect for human dignity, they would gladly not pass the buck! Isn’t this true? Who wouldn’t take credit, tell the truth, and accept all the world’s praises when your decision based on love for neighbor rather than fear resulted in the saving of many, many lives? You would be raised to the 3rd heaven with St. Paul. Maybe even elected President of the free world. You would be adored, loved, admired, raised to the rafters of the Boston Garden (or Madison Square Garden down there), thought of as being close to the God of the universe. What leader wouldn’t want this result? Well, they all want this result, but someone needs to tell them they need to act like Jesus and not the Pitchfork Man. Stop passing the ugly buck.

One of the more poignant parts of this week’s Gospel of the man born blind is Jesus taking the initiative to heal the blind man. “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Truth be told, Jesus remains the light of the world even though he has ascended to his glory in heaven. There is no darkness in Him. There is only darkness - blindness if you will - in anyone who makes decisions, personal or communal, where the Lord’s ways are not even considered. Are you yet sick of the thought and practice that politics is a hard game void of God’s presence? How many more millions of peoples’ lives need to be destroyed by this broken

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Mar 13	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 14	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Mar 15	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Mar 16	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Mar 17	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Mar 18	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Mar 20	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 21	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

DEACON FRANK MYSKA

Deacon, Frank, at this time, remains in St. Mary's Health Care Center in Worcester. Any parishioner who would like to send Deacon Frank an uplifting card wishing him good health and recovery, we're sure he would like to receive a few of them from the people of his Parish. For those who wish to do so, you can send it to Deacon Frank Myska, St. Mary Health Care Center, 39 Queen St., Worcester, MA 01610.

**YES, WE WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER
AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!!**

Name _____

Address: _____

**City
& Zip** _____

Phone _____

Envelopes yes ____ No ____

Number of People in Household _____

**PLEASE, TEAR THIS OFF AND PLACE IN THE
COLLECTION BASKET! THANK YOU!**